

Clinton Presbyterian Church

News & Events....



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From the Pastor's Pen

Dear Friends,

Right after we returned from our thanksgiving trip to Pittsburgh an email dropped into my inbox with this line as the header "Be where your feet are." Five little words that might help ground us this Advent season.

"Be where your feet are." The weeks between now and the end of the year are so often packed to the brim. Our minds wander both to our "to do lists," borrowing worry from the future, and to the past, comparing this holiday season with years past, perhaps wishing that our lives were still the same. To "Be where your feet are" is a simple invitation, yet incredibly challenging at the same time.

There are so many times I miss the beauty of the moment because I can't seem to settle in to the now. As we turn the corner into the Advent season, there will be many errands to run, gifts to buy, food to plan, and work to do, along with expectations and hopes for the season. But in ALL of it, no matter what we are doing, may we be ALL IN where our feet are.

Even in the grocery store (thank you, God, for an abundance of food).

Even when prepping the Christmas dinner (thank you, God, for guests at our table).

Even when buying gifts (thank you, God, for special people in my life).

Even when relationships are difficult (thank you, God, for growing me in maturity, wisdom, and understanding).

I look forward to sharing this holy season with you. May we find our feet here at CPC often in worship and service and as we pay attention to where our feet are, may we encounter Emmanuel, God-with-us, in a new way.

See you in church,

Tracey





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WORSHIP

THE HANGING OF THE GREENS

Usually we “Hang the Greens” after church on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. This year with an extra Sunday between Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent, we took the opportunity to incorporate the preparation of our sanctuary space into our time of worship. The customs and symbols of Advent have been developed though many centuries and many cultures, and this service offered us a chance to learn more about each of the symbols, most importantly how they point us towards Christ as we wait expectantly to celebrate his birth again and pray for his coming again in glory. Thank you to everyone who participated as together we prepared our worship space for the holy seasons of Advent and Christmas!





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WORSHIP

ADVENT AT CLINTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



ADVENT SERMON SERIES



Did you grow up with a guest book in your home for visitors to sign after a visit? Or perhaps you have signed one when leaving a vacation home? Maybe it's a quaint tradition that has fallen by the wayside in our electronic age! This advent scripture will guide us through a list of visitors who prepare us for God's arrival. Join us on Sunday to see who is stopping by!

ADVENT MIDWEEK REFLECTIONS

Perhaps you have heard of the icebreaker "two truths and a lie." Each person shares three "facts" about themselves, two are true and one is, well...not! It's a fun way to get to know new people. We're adapting this idea for our midweek Advent reflections this week but eliminating the lie part! We're calling it "Two Questions and a Song!" Each week, Pastor Tracey will interview a member of our church family, ask them two questions, related to Advent and Christmas, and then invite them to share a favourite song from the season. Our talented musicians will then record the selected song each week, allowing us to share in their beauty as we celebrate the season. This will be a great way for us to get to know others in our church family a little better while reflecting on the gifts of our faith. Will any of our interviewees have the same favorite song as you? You'll have to tune in to find out!

Advent Midweek Reflections will be sent via email each Wednesday of Advent – keep an eye out for their arrival!

"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern."
– Mother Teresa



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THANKSGIVING SERVICE

On Sunday November 19 we filled our sanctuary with testimonies of Thanksgiving, reflecting on God's goodness and the blessings of being part of such a wonderful church family. Young and old alike lifted words of Thanksgiving as our musicians carried us joyfully in song. Thanks be to God for a full and fun Sunday!



WORSHIP

ADVENT AT CLINTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

This year's Advent Devotional is produced by the Presbyterian Outlook. Author Teri Ott says of these reflections, "We often treat Christmas as an end, as if all we are waiting for is the birth of Christ and the opening of presents on Christmas morning. After the living room is trashed, full of ripped wrapping paper, and all Santa's cookies have mysteriously disappeared, we've successfully 'done' Christmas. But Christmas is a new hope, not an end. We celebrate Jesus' first Advent with an eye toward his second and the way God is actively at work redeeming and renewing our world."

May these reflections help us to find hope in unsettling days as we trust in God's coming redemption. Printed copies of this daily devotional are available at the back of the sanctuary and will also be shared via email each week of Advent.

[Read the full text here.](#)

UPCOMING IN WORSHIP

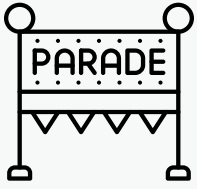
Bell Choir Performance December 3

Presentation Brass December 10

Christmas Pageant December 17

Christmas Eve Services December 24

Christmas at CPC



Christmas Parade - December 1 @7pm

The Clinton Christmas Parade is back and we are looking forward to participating! Kids are invited to ride on the float and we would love to wave to congregation members all along the route! Come out tonight and wave us on!



Live Nativity December 16 from 5-6:30pm

All church members, friends and members of the community are invited to come by CPC on December 16th from 5-6:30 pm for this special event.

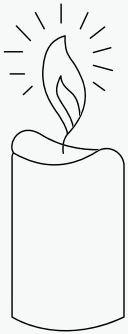
Live animals included! And be sure to tell all your friends and family in the area to join us too!



Christmas Pageant & Advent Breakfast - December 17

In worship we will hear once again, the story of the first Christmas told by eager shepherds and tiny angels. Come and share the wonder.

We'll enjoy breakfast together afterwards in Fellowship Hall.



Christmas Eve at CPC

5 pm Family Service

As a congregation we will retell the story of Christ's birth with the angels, the shepherds and the sheep.

9pm Candlelight Communion Service

Come and be lifted in joy through Word and Song as we welcome the Christ child and usher in Christmas Day at this candlelight service.



MUSICAL HAPPENINGS

Mr. Ted Brancato

These are exciting days in the life of the CPC Music Ministry! To look back a bit, we had an innovative "Hanging of the Greens" service last Sunday (11/26) that got the congregation involved with decorating the sanctuary and entrance to the church, and got the congregation singing songs that aren't often heard in an Advent or Christmas service like "Deck the Halls" and "O Christmas Tree". Speaking of which, our new alto, **Judith (Judy) Maxwell**, sang a gorgeous rendition of "O Christmas Tree" inspired by Aretha Franklin's recording of the song.

Looking forward, we kick off Advent with a music-filled service this Sunday (12-3) with a new bell choir piece, led by **Jared Miner**, "Gratitude (God's Grace)", that stretches the choir to new musical heights. Also, during this service, **Ted Brancato and Kevin Thompson** switch places - Kevin conducting and Ted singing the baritone part - on an accapella arrangement of "The Hunter" by Johannes Brahms.

Other music we have planned for Advent is the brass quintet led by **Larry Kursar** on 12-10, the Christmas Pageant with special music planned and led by **Abby Dougherty, Julie Baldassare, and Zan Struebing** on 12/17, and then a morning Christmas Eve service, followed by the 5pm Family service and finally, a 9pm Candlelight service. The 5pm service will feature music sung by our Youth Choir and the ever-popular "A Christmas Retelling" led by David and Tracey Henry. The Chancel Choir is preparing two beautiful pieces for the 9pm service, and we will have **Mike Green** playing trumpet and **Amey Barnes** playing flute.

So put on your seat belt and prepare yourself to be inspired by your very talented CPC musicians and vocalists this Christmas season!



CHILDREN & YOUTH

Sunday School

Our Sunday school classes continued to meet throughout the month of November, writing notes to be included with the Thanksgiving baskets and preparing window decorations for the United Way of Hunterdon County - what a talented and giving bunch! Throughout the month of December, our kids will be busy preparing for the pageant to be presented to the congregation on December 17. This is a don't miss Sunday – we will see you there!



CHILDREN & YOUTH



Our Joy Scouts have continued to serve others with a joyful heart all throughout the fall months. Highlights included serving at the Flemington area food pantry and putting up the Christmas decorations for the United Way. Lots of other fun activities are planned for the new year - all kids are encouraged to be involved!



There's nothing sweeter than having fun with church friends! Our Sunday Funday Crew has enjoyed painting, snacking and taking a trip to Just Chill! More fun is just around the corner on Sunday, December 3 @ 11:30. Meet in Fellowship Hall for some Christmas crafting with Ms. Jessica!



Also partying this month is Chaos and Chaos Jr!
December 3rd - It's a Christmas Event! Wear your favorite ugly sweater and bring a \$5 gift for a gift exchange.

Middle School 5:30pm @ CPC

High School 7:00pm @ CPC



ADULTS

grow in grace

SMALL GROUPS

We've been a little slow off the starting block with forming some new small groups for discipleship at CPC (Mea culpa - Tracey) but it seems that there is enough interest to begin in the new year. If you are interested in being a part of a group, it's not too late. Drop Tracey a line and she'll get you connected to others who are available interested in the same time/place eg, weekday evenings, online only etc. A new thing for a new year!



ALL NEW AT CPC: GREAT DECISIONS

Let's talk. Like really talk. About things going on all around the world and how that impacts us in our little corner of that world.

Recently, Colleen Duerr and Tracey were introduced to the Great Decisions series through the Foreign Policy Association. We thought it was a great opportunity to gather and talk about the articles they provide in a way that welcomes all opinions, recognizes any biases, incorporates our faith, and encourages kind and thoughtful discussion. The FPA offers a workbook with eight articles followed by questions for discussion. They also offer topical videos. We were thinking that we could gather for a meal and a chat about the article. The topics for 2024 are:

Mideast Realignment, Climate technology and competition, Science across borders, U.S. -China trade rivalry, NATO's future, Understanding Indonesia, High Seas Treaty and Pandemic Preparedness.

The tentative dates are the following Thursday evenings from 6:00pm - 7:30pm and includes dinner:

January 25th, February 22nd, March 28th, April 25th, May 23rd, August 1st, September 26th, October 24th

The cost for the workbook is \$35 each but we will make sure there is an extra copy in the church office if you'd like to read it there. We'll order 10 copies to start so that we can take advantage of the discount but if we run out, we'll provide the link for you to order yourself.

We would appreciate your response to the following survey by November 10th to let us know if you're interested:

[SURVEY](#)

COMMUNITY

Festival of Trees

Clinton Presbyterian Church Fellowship and Growth committees volunteered to donate and decorate a tree for the Hunterdon Red Mill annual “Festival of Trees“. To participate, trees must be in line with one of several categories and this year we chose “Spirit of Nature” with the title of our tree “ Cardinals appear when angels are near.”

The tree honors the loved ones lost this past year, who were cherished members or family members of our congregation. With donations from church members, Robin Carver, Tina Honthy, Leigh, June and Mitchell Perry assembled the tree this past weekend with buffalo check, burlap, red, white and gold features, accented by bright red Cardinals, field mice, antlers and other woodland motifs.

Our trees, and dozens of other others submitted by local businesses and nonprofits, will be on display outdoors amongst the museum grounds starting Thanksgiving weekend through December 1,2 and 3 in line with the Winter Village market being held the same weekends on the grounds of the mill. Decorating and displaying a tree helps to spark holiday spirit for thousands of visitors and generate support for the museum. For more information visit redmill.org.



COMMUNITY



Having a full house for the holidays and don't know where everyone will sleep? We can help! We have 1 brand new and 4 lightly used air mattresses for sale -all proceeds to support Family Promise. (All Twin Size - Intex Dura Beam Plus) New: \$30 Used: \$20

Email office@clintonpresbyterian.net to secure yours today!

LET'S CELEBRATE!

December Birthdays

- 1 Alice Korab
- 4 Glenn Gray
- 7 Lora Pelose, Zan Struebing
- 9 Dennis Kotopoulis
- 15 Gail Saltvedt
- 16 Mollie Little
- 17 Thea Henry, Jason Krushinski, Karen Kursar
- 19 Mackenzie Ahmed, Victoria Ahmed
- 20 Rich Jackle
- 21 Jessica Fernandes, Tina Martin
- 24 Evie Lebron
- 26 Kim Perez
- 28 Henry Kvara
- 31 Melissa Bieksha

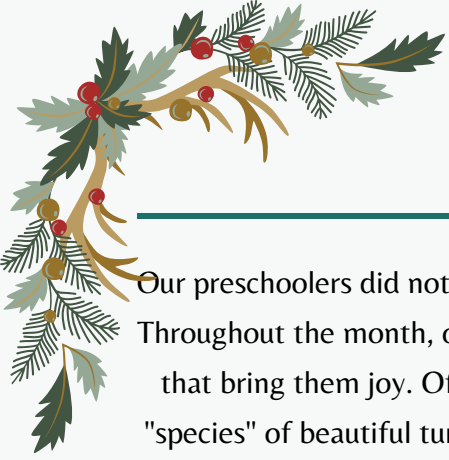
December Anniversaries

- 11 Jonathan & Sharon Rosenberg
- 15 Jonathan & Karen Sauers
- 26 Steve and Nancy Hovey
- 27 Ralph and Gwili Marsh
- 28 Scott and Sandie Lundeen
- 30 Joseph and Paige Darocha
- 31 Colin and Jessica Bruno

January Birthdays

- 3 Jaxon Crespo, Rich Prakopcyk, Alyssa Tombs
- 4 Charlotte Blaus
- 6 Rebecca Tombs
- 7 Ben Prakopcyk,
- 8 Courtney Fernandes, Spencer Holmsborg, Chris Honthy, Rick Hyman

- 13 Kenneth Wirth
- 14 Domenic DiPace, Marin Dougherty
- 15 Cliff Sayre
- 16 Bill Kreutel
- 18 Chad Longell
- 20 Donavyn Meyh, Chelsea Rosario
- 21 Marissa Annese
- 22 Angela Penyak
- 23 Emmaline DiPace
- 25 Carly Krushinski, Mason Pozarycki
- 26 Brian Barnes
- 27 John Roth
- 29 Bob Ballantine
- 30 Parker Henry,
- 31 Dave Boyer, Megan Traphagen



Preschool

Our preschoolers did not wait until the fourth Thursday in November to share what they were thankful for. Throughout the month, our teachers and children gave thanks to many people, places, pets and special toys that bring them joy. Of course we could not say good-bye to November without making many different "species" of beautiful turkeys, reading fun Thanksgiving stories, especially those read by our special friend, Ms Judy, and preparing and eating delicious applesauce.

For more than six years, the CPC family has been supportive of our preschool program. We are thankful for all of you for sharing your love, your prayers and your generous support. Wishing everyone a Christmas season filled with joy and happiness.



MISSION

THANK YOU, Clinton Presbyterian Church, for all your kindness and generosity during this season of giving!

Thanks to all of you, we delivered 25 baskets of food to families within our community. Thank you for all the donations of food and money as well as your time delivering to families. And thanks to the many helping hands on delivery day making everything go quick and smoothly. We are grateful to ShopRite for their annual generous discount on our food purchased at their store.

Thanks to everyone who took a tag from the giving tree and bought gift cards, children's clothing, winter coats and boots, books for kids, hats and mittens and other needed items that will go to several agencies and families right here in Hunterdon County and across the miles to old friends in Maine.

You have all helped make a happy holiday season for many of our friends and neighbors in need.

Many Thanks and Merry Christmas to all,
— Your Mission Team

thank
you



MISSION

“I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.”
Maya Angelou



MISSION

Christmas Giving Tree 2023

Sunday is the final day to drop off items for our Giving Tree! There are so many gifts beneath the tree already and we are so grateful for the generosity of the members of CPC. It's not too late to contribute and help those less fortunate have a very merry holiday.

Tags on the tree are for children of local families, children whose families are homeless and part of Family Promise, single moms and their children at Friendship Center for New Beginnings in Flemington, Family Promise in Hunterdon County, City Relief, children and teens in an impoverished rural area in Maine, Safe in Hunterdon, Family Success Center and the CPC Preschool Scholarship Fund.

Please return all gifts UNWRAPPED and place them under the tree by Sunday, December 3rd. Tape the tags to your gifts and you can include wrapping paper and tape if you'd like to.

The Mission team will gather in Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, December 5th to pack up and organize all the gifts for local delivery or mailing. Questions? Contact the office at office@clintonpresbyterian.net

We also have some tags online for those who are worshipping from home and wish to participate.
Click below for online tags!



If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next.
C.S. Lewis

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

As you know, in Mid-October we launched our yearly stewardship campaign, asking everyone to consider how they might support CPC in the year ahead with a financial pledge. These pledges are vital to sustaining existing ministries and exploring new opportunities for mission and service, as well as providing for staff salaries and the day-to-day operating costs of the church.

This year's Narrative Budget gives a snapshot of our life in 2023 and looks ahead to 2024. If you have not yet had a chance to read it over, please take some time to do so now. There is a whole lot to be thankful for and more to look forward to.

Our pledge giving goal for 2024 is \$303,000. To date, 61 pledges have been received, totaling just over \$250,000, so we still have some distance to travel to meet our goal. If you have not yet made your pledge, would you prayerfully consider what commitment you might make as a sign and signal of your investment in the good work of the Kingdom at CPC?

When you are ready, pledges can be returned in three ways:

1. Submit your pledge online
2. Return a pledge card to the church office at 91 Center Street, Clinton, NJ 08809
3. Drop your pledge card in the offering plate during worship

Thank you in advance for your generosity. And of course, if you have questions about giving practices or patterns at CPC or if you have never pledged before and would like to chat about that, don't hesitate to Tracey directly.



2023 DONATIONS TO CPC

Week by week and month by month, your gifts, tithes and offerings have enabled and sustained ministry here at CPC. As of the end of the December, weekly pledges received were at 83 % year to date – thank you!

Giving statements will be emailed to all members early in December and you are encouraged, where possible, to fulfil your pledged giving by December 31.



Stop by the office for some Christmas Cheer or to check out our new mailboxes! Many thanks to Kevin for installing them for us and freeing up space for our coffee and treats.



YEAR-END GIVING AND MORE

As you plan your year-end giving and look ahead to opportunities to give in 2024, the following information regarding vehicles for giving might be useful to you.

Gifts of Appreciated Assets such as stocks bonds and mutual funds

When long-term appreciated assets are donated to a non-profit charity like CPC, three benefits are realized. First CPC, as a tax-exempt organization, gains the full value of the donated stock. Second, donations for the full value of the stock may be deductible for donors who itemize when filing their income tax returns. Third, the donor would likely avoid capital gains taxes on the increased value of the asset.

Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

For those who are IRA owners age 70-1/2 or older, a QCD (qualified charitable deduction) is another gifting strategy. And, if you are age 73 or older, you may also use it to meet your required minimum distribution. This allows you to directly transfer up to \$100,000 annually from an IRA to a charity, tax-free. Keep in mind it does not qualify if you take the disbursement and then donate to the charity. It must be a direct transfer from the IRA. Such transfers are not included in your adjusted gross income for income tax purposes, removing it from taxable income and potentially avoiding the loss of other tax benefits. While you cannot “double-dip” and also count your RMD as a charitable contribution, it may be more advantageous to lower your taxable income for the year.

Donor-Advised Funds (DAF's)

DAF's provide a simplified way to manage charitable giving with a dedicated account for charitable giving. Upon transferring cash or securities to an IRS-approved donor fund, you are eligible for an immediate tax deduction. The timing of contributions may provide a tax benefit to the donor. The donor then retains the flexibility to decide the amounts and timing of distributions from the fund to charitable organizations such as CPC.

Matching Gifts

Please remember CPC during your 2024 benefits enrolment process. Many employers will provide a matching gift through your payroll charity giving or one-time charitable gift.

You should seek the advice of your tax and financial professional for how these vehicles best apply to your personal situation.

Building Updates



Have you heard the good news? The scaffolding is slowly coming down at the front of CPC. Of course, the better news is that the repairs which have been made to the bell tower are both precise and lasting.

Your investment here has alleviated a burden from future generations who will worship in this beautiful space for years to come.

You might also have noticed that many of the stairwells around the building have received a facelift, with new stain on both the treads and the steps. It's amazing what a difference this work has made.

Between Christmas and New Year, the final stairwell between fellowship hall and the downstairs classrooms will receive the same treatment, completing this stage of our interior renovations.

In the new year, we'll be working on the signage and reviewing remaining items on the Capital Campaign. Thank you for your generosity and patience as we work steadily on these projects.

